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MADRAS WAR REVIEW

A WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE WORLD WAR

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Mr. STIMSON

Three Objectives

The main big work has still to be done. Co-operation with the French has been very hearty. We mean to develop a co-operative spirit between the Allies and the French on which so much depends. Most of the attacking forces in Tunisia have been those of our ally, Great Britain. We had some forces there and had a chance to make a show which was very gratifying to our men and most disheartening to the enemy.

When air superiority has been obtained three objectives will lie ahead—to expel or destroy Axis forces in Tunisia; to attack Tripoli and destroy the Germans under Rommel by getting behind him; and to co-operate with the British in making the North African coast and the Mediterranean a safer line reaching to the Egyptian area.

Mr. STIMSON, United States Secretary for War in an interview on December 12

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Running Commentary

Stern and Terrible year of 1943 : Danger of Over-confidence. Allied successes in different theatres of war have given rise to a feeling of great confidence in the victory of the Allies. Important successes on the Russian Front, North Africa and South-West Pacific have given the impression that the war is practically over and that the Axis powers are almost finished. There is no harm in having a feeling of robust confidence in ultimate victory, but the danger of over-confidence must, at all costs, be avoided. While we should all rejoice in the successes of the Allies, we should not relax in our task of putting forth our utmost energy and enthusiasm in the war effort. The joy in achievement should be tempered with warnings of a long and stern climb. What is required at this turning point of the war is neither deflation of confidence, nor acceptance of the idea that victory is now assured because defeat has been put behind us. A mental revolution is required at the present time, which will inspire and enthuse the factories, offices and firms of the United Nations all the world over with a sacrificial offensive ardour, which would forearm us against setbacks which will surely occur from time to time during the stern and terrible year of 1943. We must train ourselves to judge all successes in their proper perspective and subject everything to a cool realistic analysis. We should not permit our enthusiasm to run away with our sense of judgment.

Let us first consider Germany's strength in Europe. There are about 180 German divisions on the Russian Front. Many of these have suffered slaughters and privations and have lost in size and number heavily. Some thirty reserve divisions are stationed in the Baltic countries and about an equal number in the region of Kharkov. The Red Army is pinning down and eating into the German reserves by multiple counter-strokes. Not only "General Winter," but also General Stalin is freezing the great German Army in the Eastern Front.

NOTICE

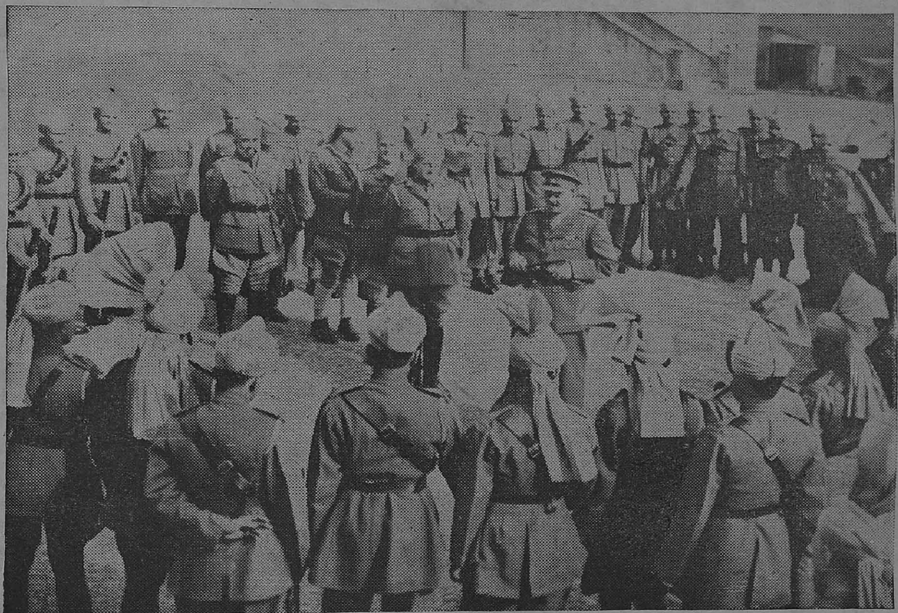
AS Friday, December 25, is a Christmas holiday, there will be no issue of the MADRAS WAR REVIEW on that day. The next issue will be published on January 1, 1943.

In the occupied countries there are about forty German garrison divisions. The occupation of France, Sardinia and the coastal strip of Tunisia mean another thirty divisions, which might have been drawn from the Eastern Front reserves, or more probably from the general strategic reserves in Central Europe. If Germany invades Spain, which is at present unlikely, more than thirty divisions would be required to crush Spanish

resistance and maintain the lines of communication through a hostile country. There are about five German divisions in Italy, which has become an increasing liability to Germany and a further drain on German military manpower. It is estimated that the total number of German divisions is approximately 290.

It will be clear from these figures that if the Allies are able to follow up the Russian blows by a yet further major action of their own, apart from their two offensives in the Mediterranean, they will complete the process of freezing Hitler's west before it was too late. In the present war, if the Allies can successfully freeze the German defence of the European Fortress and deliver co-ordinated assaults at widely separated points, their strategic position will be stronger than it was in 1918.

This does not, however, mean that the German defence is about to be " stretched to the limit " and a total collapse of the German military machine can be brought about by a few swift blows. For even if the German divisions are frozen from Norway to the Western Mediterranean and from the Eastern Mediterranean to the White Sea simultaneously, the German defensive system will still be formidable.



His Highness the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, one of the Indian representatives at the War Cabinet and Pacific War Council, recently visited an Indian contingent in the Scottish Command, where he saw Pack Mule Companies of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps. Photo shows His Highness talking to a Reinforcement Unit during his visit.

defence arrangements. In other words, if a major attack is made at any one point, Hitler must find it extremely difficult to concentrate sufficient force to repel it.

* * * *

German Defence System : Its Strength and Weakness.

It has been pointed out by German Generals such as von Leeb that Germany lost the last war because she kept her armies too long evenly divided between the east and the west and so lost an opportunity of massing an overwhelming force for an attack in the

It must be remembered that the estimate of the positions of the German Army that we have given are only approximate and does not take into account the armies of Italy and other satellites. Further the fighting quality of the Axis forces should never be under-estimated.

Germany to-day commands more territory and therefore more resources, more

(*Continued on page* 6.)

El Agheila: Rommel

General MONTGOMERY

General Montgomery has "done it again"! Rommel has been turned out of El Agheila. The news, it is stated, has taken Cairo completely by surprise. As for the outside world, the surprise is even greater. It was expected on all hands that the haste with which Rommel staged his retreat from El Alamein westwards was only to reach the well-fortified positions of El Agheila where he would make a stand. It was thought that one of the biggest battles in North Africa would be fought out at that place. But Rommel has disappointed. He has repeated El Alamein at El Agheila, without a great fight.

Ten days ago, General Montgomery said to pressmen, on the eve of what he called "one of the decisive battles in history":

> "*It (the battle) will be the turning point in the war, and will swing our way. It may be a hard battle, and the Germans will fight, but we shall drive the Boche out of Africa. There is no alternative.*"

Walked out of the Ring

The Germans did not fight; they walked out of the ring, as it were, before the knock-out blow could be administered. They were compelled to do so, because the Allied forces operating to the south had outflanked their defences, and they realized that their position was untenable. The heavily-mauled Africa Korps thus escaped further mauling at the hands of the Eighth Army.

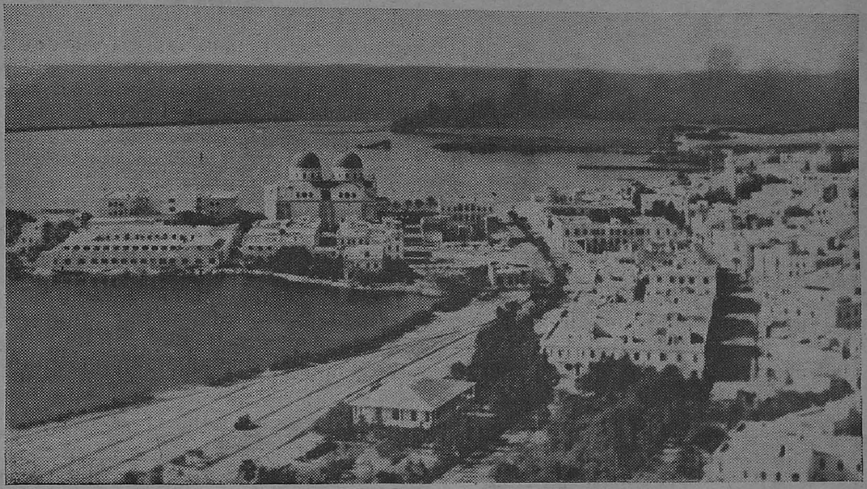
The R.A.F. played an important part at El Agheila. It is reported that the attacks of the R.A.F. on Rommel's withdrawing forces registered a record number of sorties for fighter bombers in any theatre of war anywhere. Rommel has also registered a new record—for retreat!

Rommel told the press in Berlin on October 3:

> "*The gateway to Egypt is within our grasp. We have not gone there to allow ourselves, sooner or later, to be thrown back again.*"

Within a short period of less than two and a half months, Rommel has allowed himself to be thrown back. He has in fact been flung so far back that the gateway to Egypt, far from being within his grasp, is not even in sight, however hard he may strain himself. He has been thrown out, not merely from Egypt, but practically from Libya.

Re-starts Retreat !



Benghazi, which played an important part in supplying the Eighth Army and enabling it to score a walk-over victory at El Agheila.

Benghazi plays Important Part

Commenting on the Rout of Rommel in Egypt in the middle of last month, we said that the Battle of El Alamein ended in a glorious and decisive victory for the Allies but that the Battle of the Western Desert was not yet over and that Rommel's striking power still remained. Now it seems to be practically over and done with, and Rommel's striking power seems to be useful only in striking westwards! In helping this great westward trek, the harbour of Benghazi, it is reported, has played an important part, for it was through Benghazi that supplies reached the Eighth Army.

The disaster that has befallen the Axis forces in Libya will need a lot of explaining by Goebbels and his disciples. It is obvious that great importance was attached to the operations in Libya, which King Victor Emanuel, after the completion of its conquest in 1912, compared to the bone of the chop—the meat part being Tunisia, on which modern Italy always cast its covetous eyes. Now the bone has gone, and with it the meat also is about to go !

Italian Colonists and Forces leave early

It is of some interest to note that some time after Rommel began his great retreat, Italy decided to remove *en masse* all Italian colonists who settled in Libya four years ago. It may be recalled that, in 1938, General Balbo, Governor of Libya, organized a great colonization scheme under which a large number of Italian families migrated from Italy to Libya. Only large families were chosen to take part in this scheme which was based on the ancient Greek model of not employing outside labour. The colonists had to be strictly families, and not even cousins were permitted to accompany them. Large convoys taking about 20,000 Italians left the port of Genoa under the leadership of Balbo, and now, after four years, the homeward bound trip had to be undertaken under the compelling force of circumstances created by the advance of General Montgomery's troops.

As for the Italian troops themselves, they did not wait to be abandoned by the Germans as in Egypt. They packed up their kit bags first, says *The Daily Mail's* Air Correspondent, and got out of the crumbling Axis lines.

A Great British Victory

The Axis has suffered yet another defeat in Africa. Rommel's retreat may be a strategic retreat, but it is still a great British victory. The cause of the United Nations has been taken yet another step on the glorious road to ultimate triumph.

RUNNING COMMENTARY

(*Continued from page 3.*)

manpower and more armament output than the Kaiser did at the height of his military power. All these facts should be borne in mind when we feel justifiable joy and optimism at the magnificent successes of the United Nations.

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German Propaganda Methods: A New Device. An ingenious device in German propaganda methods has been brought to light by Mr. W. S. Sinclair, B.B.C. propaganda expert, in a broadcast talk given recently. He describes Berlin's clever method of creating a news agency which does not exist anywhere except in the imagination of Goebbels. This news agency is called the International Information Bureau and it is quoted by the German Radio in its news bulletins from time to time. It was invented some time in October last. The German Radio pretends that it is quoting from a neutral news agency. At the beginning of last month, the German Radio said that the special correspondent of the International Information Bureau in North Africa reported that the large-scale British attack which was started by heavy artillery a day earlier on the El Alamein Front had collapsed, and so on. Such reports may give the impression of unreliability, but the listeners will be led to believe that such a news agency does really exist. But the fact is there is no such agency, and no correspondent of the agency exists in North Africa or anywhere else.

The pretence that the "International Information Bureau" is a real agency is kept up by the Germans by an attitude of outward detachment. At the end of October the German Radio quoted the International Information Bureau as reporting that the U-boats in the Atlantic had sunk 100,000 tons of Allied shipping. The same radio reported half an hour later a correction from the Bureau to the effect that the total was really 165,000 tons. Three and a half hours later, on the same day, the German Radio said that the figures given by the International Information Bureau might not be altogether reliable, as the German authorities had not yet issued their official figures. Mr. Sinclair says: "It's rather like a literary man publishing a novel under a pen name, and then writing a review of it under his own name." Continuing he says:

> "You see that the invention of the imaginary news agency is for the Germans a most ingenious and useful device. When the Nazis want to say something which they would like to say, and which they yet feel to be so extreme and absurd that they don't want to risk having it quoted back at them later, they can do this by saying that this so-called neutral news agency has reported it. This enables them to start rumours and drop hints in the hope that some fool somewhere or other will believe them. It enables them also to publish extreme claims and then to escape the consequences afterwards when the full facts become known, by saying that it was not the Germans who made the statement, but only this regrettably unreliable news agency."

Mr. Sinclair points out that the German Radio frequently had resort to this imaginary news agency for reporting the fighting at Stalingrad and observes that

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Commander-in-Chief's Tribute to Madrassis

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We did not enlist a great many Madrassis for a long time. We have recently had experience of a Madras battery of artillery in the Western Desert. They did very well indeed. I hope all the Madrassis will live up to that reputation. We have got a number of Madras soldiers in the artillery and anti-aircraft artillery. I was in Bangalore a few months ago and found them to be very fine type of men."

—GENERAL WAVELL, *in an interview on December 14.*

reports from such an agency enable Nazi propagandists to give themselves an appearance of moderation, caution and reliability by periodically warning their listeners against believing much of what the news agency announces, unless it was officially confirmed by the German Propaganda Ministry.

* * * *

"International Information Bureau:" Two Reasons for Invention. Why was it that the Nazis had to invent such a news agency? Mr. Sinclair gives two reasons. Firstly, the old Nazi trick of attributing wild statements to neutral newspapers was not working well, as the B.B.C. exposed the trick by getting hold of the neutral newspaper referred to and reading over to listeners the actual passage distorted by the German propaganda experts. The second reason was the change in the military situation or the change in the kind of the situation that the Nazis had to report. This will be clear when it is pointed out that in the early days of the war when the Germans overran Norway, Holland, Belgium and France, when they advanced regularly day after day in Russia, the German High Command communiqués came to have an air of accuracy and reliability. The impression that was generally spreading was that Nazi propaganda was all lies, but that the German High Command communiqués were accurate. What happened was when the Germans were very near a certain town, the German High Command reported it as having been already captured. This in fact would be happening a few days later. In other words, the German High Command communiqués, like the rest of Nazi propaganda, were frequently plain lies, but these lies were detected only by those making a special study of the subject like Mr. Sinclair. The Germans resorted to these lying tactics, because they wanted to give the impression of continuous military successes. This was going on practically quite well until they began to meet with the reverses, when everything did not go according to plan.

When the Battle of Britain was at its height, the German High Command announced that the R.A.F. had been driven out of the skies of England and that the *Luftwaffe* had complete air control. This was not at all true. But the German High Command thought that it would come true in about a week's time or so. But many weeks passed, and it became clear that far from being driven out of the skies of England, the R.A.F. was proceeding to control the air on the other side of the Channel.

When Germany invaded Russia the same thing happened in regard to the communiqués of the German High Command. Then again people began to believe them, because the statements made, though not true at the time, did become true some days later. It was only when the Nazi advance was halted by the Russians in the early winter of last year that it became clear to the general public that the communiqués were simply not true. The same thing happened this winter also, and the Nazi propagandists thought it was time to invent the "International Information Bureau" to cheer up the German people by reports of imaginary successes. A recent instance is the report of this International News Agency that the whole factory district of Stalingrad was in German hands. This again was not at all true. But such reports created a general atmosphere of military achievement without committing the German High Command itself to a definite statement which might turn out to be a plain lie.

Britain and China

"As a result of the Japanese aggression, the British people took their place with pride and determination beside your gallant countrymen. I share your conviction that this spirit of comradeship will be of lasting benefit to both sides and will find expression in the ultimate construction of a new world wherein free peoples shall live together in peace and amity."

MR. CHURCHILL, *in a message in London, on December 12.*

Mr. Sinclair examines the interesting question whether anything at all exists corresponding to this impressive name of the International Information Bureau. He says :

"It may simply be a name, and nothing more. It may be like that Mrs. Harris in Dickens' novel, who was always being quoted by Sarah Gamp. You remember how it is only after a long acquaintance with Sarah that one realized that the loquacious Mrs. Harris existed in Sarah's imagination only, and nowhere else . . . Whether it's just a Mrs. Harris or whether it does consist of a small office of some kind, it's simply an invention of the German Propaganda Ministry, and it's invented for the announcements or the things the Propaganda Ministry does not want to risk saying itself."

Reports from this imaginary news agency have been, says Mr. Sinclair, appearing with increasing frequency in the German Radio news bulletins during the last few weeks. It is expected that, in the coming months, when the military events continue to go more and more against Germany, this news agency will be quoted more and more.

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Japan's Shipping Losses : Partial Retribution. In a leading article *The Daily Telegraph* says that the sentiment common to the messages exchanged between Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt, on the anniversary of America's entry into the war, is that Japan's aggressive power must be utterly destroyed. The paper points out that "partial retribution" has already been inflicted on Japan and that the rulers have themselves admitted about a fifth of the damage known to have been caused to her fighting forces and mercantile marine. But even this admitted fraction is quite substantial. Colonel Knox, U.S. Navy Secretary, has expressed the view that Japan's shipping losses are reaching a point gravely menacing her essential supply lines. But it must be clearly recognised that the extent of Japan's resources or the fanaticism of her people should not be underestimated. Japan has become a very grave menace to the freedom and prosperity of the peoples of the East. In a recent article, Mr. Empson, an English scholar who has spent many years in Japan and worked in the Tokyo University, points out that the reason why Britain and other nations co-operated with the Japanese in the early years of the century was because they thought that if Japan became a great industrial nation, she must help the liberation of the rest of Asia. Japan got the co-operation and help of the Western powers by a policy of hypocrisy and pretence. She paid lip service to democratic ideals and pretended to abide by the conventions of international ethics. She required tools of war and the patents of designs of the engines of the war, before she could master sufficient insolence to declare war on the world. So she was cautious. She dallied with the Axis Powers and smiled towards Britain and America. She carried on commercial negotiations with America for scrap iron, machine tools, oil, etc. When she felt that the situation in Europe was such that there was a chance of her dreams of aggrandizement being realised, she threw to the winds all her pretentions and embarked on a policy of violent aggression. She was faced with a great obstacle. It was China. After the easy conquest of Manchuria, Japan felt that within a few months, if not weeks, China would completely come under her sway and all would be well. But China stood up as a champion of freedom in Asia against Japan's aggressive might and has been fighting Japan with magnificent courage, in spite of great handicaps. Tojo, the Japanese Premier, has been forced to admit this year that the war in China is "a difficult and costly enterprise." This must have been an unpleasant shock to the Machiavellian gang of the Mitsubishi and the Military, who felt that the war against China would be a walk-over for Japan. China has been frustrating their nefarious schemes with great heroism to such an extent that Japan seems to realise that she can never conquer China easily.

THE KEY

"Air superiority is the key to victory, and we have that key."

—GENERAL SMUTS, *at a lunch in Capetown, on December 12.*

Indian Troops' Part in Defeat of Rommel

By CAPT. M. L. KATJU, M.C.

I have just come back from the Middle East. I spent about a year and a half there with the Indian Troops. I shared in their joys and sorrows; I was with them in their triumphs and reverses. We rushed together to Benghasi and Agedabia; we came back grimly fighting to Gazala. Then came the dark days of June. I was with them in the cauldron, then at El Adem and Bel Hamid, Rommel threw everything at us and we held him for a time. Forced by the weight of the armour to give way, the Indians fell back on Halfaya. Outflanked there, they fought through to Matruh. Surrounded, they cut a lane to El Alamein and there they stayed and all Rommel's men and all his tanks could not shift them.

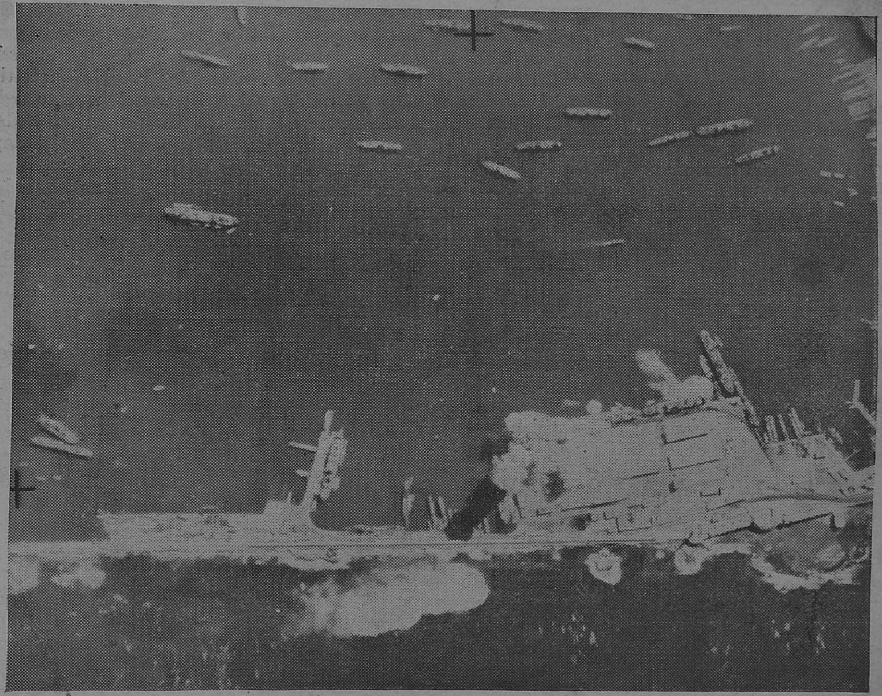
It is of the battle of Alamein that I propose to tell you to-day, a battle that lasted from July to the early days of November when the Panzers, battered and broken, cried "enough!" and ran as they had never run before.

It was a great battle, one that may well come to be known in history as a decisive one not only in the fight for the mastery of the Middle East but in the greater fight to save the world from the Axis.

MEN OF THE HOUR

I remember that day I arrived at Alamein from Matruh. Our men were pouring in from all over the desert. Dusty and dishevelled, clinging to such equipment as they could save, they gathered at their rendezous. Weary and worn but grim-faced they set to work digging and mining before yet the sweat had dried on their aching bodies. They had the knowledge that Destiny had picked them out as the men of the hour and they were keeping faith.

I remember going down the Alamein track to the Qattara Depression. All along it New Zealanders and Indians, just arrived, were hastily improvising defences, I remember



U.S. AIR FORCE BOMBS TRIPOLI.—Bombs find their objective in the Spanish Mol (upper left), as United States Army Air Force bombers successfully raided the harbour at Tripoli. Their objective was the Spanish Mol, and not the ships in the harbour.

thinking aloud "My God, we will never hold Jerry here," but I was thinking in terms of mines and wires, in terms of tanks and guns. I had not taken into account the human element, the indomitable spirit which is stronger than steel and gunpowder and says "the enemy shall not pass."

He did not. He made a little advance or two, but the Indians held on Ruweisat Ridge and we hold the Middle East to-day, threat and a promise to the Axis, a stepping stone to ravaged Europe.

RUWEISAT RIDGE

Ruweisat Ridge runs almost parallel with the coast and about ten miles away from it. Between the ridge near the coast and Ruweisat there stretches a valley with very soft going. Whoever holds Ruweisat controls this valley and, therefore, the main road along the coast. Ruweisat itself is an ill-defined ridge, not very broad and with a series of bumps on its northern side. These bumps were known as Points 64, 63 and so on according to their height. A constant effort was being maintained to control these bumps as they served the purpose of observation posts along the valley and on the southern side of the ridge as well. Any side holding an important point, say 63 for example, could make it impossible with artillery fire for the other side to consolidate ground to a considerable distance. The ridge itself was stony with depressions and hollows filled with soft sand. The bumps were, without exception, extremely rocky and it was tremendously difficult to dig in and consolidate these points. Such, in brief, was Ruweisat Ridge which cost Rommel his reputation.

ROMMEL'S INVITATION TO HITLER

He had invited the Fuehrer to Nile fish and wild duck at Mina House, just outside Cairo. He had promised his men the loot of Alexandria. I saw his men going into Alexandria—to the prisoners of war cage: what sort of a welcome the Fuehrer is preparing for Rommel I cannot say, but I am sure it will not be to the latter's liking.

In August, when we were advancing our front line and strengthening our hold on Ruweisat, we captured an Italian General and two of his principal staff officers. While we were driving them back to Alexandria, the General grew loquacious.

"We had long hoped to do this journey," he said, "in our own trucks or possibly captured British trucks. Look at the Mediterranean, isn't it pretty? I suppose Alexandria is a beautiful city. We never thought we could see it like this."

And his companion chimed in, wringing his hand, "It's hard, very hard. We (meaning the Italians) will never see Alexandria as we hoped to."

ROMMEL'S FINAL EFFORT

In September, Rommel made his final effort to fulfil his promise to Hitler. He came through the southern minefields with all his armour. In two or three days time, he told his men, "you will be in Alexandria." Instead he was back where he started. The German General, Von Thoma, captured recently said that the German strategy was to cut north-east after crossing the minefields. They hoped to get to the coast through Ruweisat Ridge and thus cut off the Eighth Army. General Von Thoma admitted that this attack failed because Ruweisat Ridge, still held by Indians and British troops, was too strongly defended. The Germans had not expected defences in such great depth.

That, as Rommel knew himself, was the last attempt. Our reinforcements were pouring in. Rommel began to dig in and organize his defences in depth. He knew the day was coming when he would have to fight desperately to hold his ground and the day came late in October. On that fateful day, the Australians and the South Africans were along the coast. The Indians guarded Ruweisat Ridge and positions vacated by the New Zealanders who had been taken out to form a support group. Further south were a British division and the famous 7th Armoured Division. Behind the Australians and South

Neutral Enemies!

A STORY going round in Washington says that a couple of Swiss journalists arrested in Tokyo protested that they were neutrals.

"No; you are neutral enemies," replied a Tokyo police officer.

"What do you call the United States and Great Britain?" asked the unhappy Swiss.

"They are belligerent enemies."

"What are the Germans and Italians?"

"They are *friendly* enemies."

Psychological Triumph follows Military Victories

By WICKHAM STEED

THE outstanding importance of military and naval successes gained by the United Nations in the past weeks is now beyond dispute. Behind those successes lies something still weightier. This is the revelation of a grand design, carefully framed, well executed, and imposed by surprise upon an unprepared and perplexed enemy.

With the exception of General Wavell's first Libyan campaign that swept the large Italian armies out of Libya two years ago and the subsequent conquest of Abyssinia and Eritrea, the strategic initiative had hitherto been held by the Axis. Now it has passed, perhaps finally, to the United Nations. This is more than a military change in the fortunes of war. It is a psychological change of immense political and moral significance.

Less than six months ago when Rommel stood at the gates of Egypt, it looked as though the southern jaw of Hitler's strategic pincers might soon close on Egypt and the Middle East while the northern jaw should bite through the Russian defences and envelop the Caucasus. Like the British Eighth Army in Egypt the Russian armies were on the defensive. Now Rommel has been driven in a headlong flight from Egypt and Libya. Anglo-American forces are entering Tunis and threatening to expel the Axis from North Africa entirely. The southern jaw of the pincers has been dislocated and broken. The northern jaw is being sent back in the Caucasus and Stalingrad stands firm.

INDIAN SEAMEN AWARDED B.E.M.—At a recent investiture held by H.M. the King, two Indian seamen were awarded the B.E.M. On the left is Quarter-Master Noon Hossein who, when his ship was attacked by enemy planes and set on fire, took up a rope, jumped overboard, swam to the quay and made the rope fast so that his shipmates could get ashore by sliding down the rope. With him is the other recipient—Abdur Rahman, who was a Mess Steward. Abdur Rahman's ship was torpedoed and sank in 18 minutes. She was abandoned in good order and in three boats the men stayed in the vicinity for 36 hours in the hope that help might come in response to their S.O.S. They then made for the nearest land. The boats became separated but all reached safely after 13 days. By his cheerful bearing Rahman kept up the morale of his companions throughout the ordeal.

HITLER ON THE DEFENSIVE

Hitler has been compelled to occupy all France and organize defensively the southern European front. The Mediterranean is no longer under Axis control and the plight of Italy has grown precarious. As though to

crown these changes in Europe and Africa, Japan has suffered a heavy naval defeat off the Solomon islands.

Considerable though these changes are both in themselves and as foreshadowing the possibility of further changes, I think the psychological change is more considerable still. For the first time since the war began, a constructive Allied plan has appeared. In the battle of wits, Allied minds have shown themselves superior to those of the enemy.

From the outset the moral force of the Allied cause has been superior to the immoral predatory force of the Axis. The economic force was also certain to tell in favour of the Allies sooner or later. Yet there seemed room for doubt whether the Allies were or could be mentally superior to the Axis and whether in point of mental co-ordination, they could overcome the advantage possessed by Nazi Germany who could operate on interior lines and enjoyed an effective unity of command.

Now this doubt has been dispelled, thanks to the manner in which victory was organized and won in Egypt as an opening stroke for the liberation of North Africa by the greatest amphibious operation ever recorded in warfare. This psychological triumph must bear fruit in many directions.

A WORLD-WIDE CHANGE

Taken together with the victories of the United States and Australia over Japan in the southern Pacific, it marks the beginning of a world-wide change in the prospects of the war. The Russian confidence in total victory within a calculable future has been redoubled. The satellites and the accomplices of the Axis are wondering how best they may escape the wrath to come. Even in quarters where the ultimate defeat of the Axis was believed to be a moral certainty, it has now assumed the shape of a tangible reality. Italy trembles under the grip of her German master. The desperate efforts of Japan to recapture the Solomon islands foreshadow the disheartening effects of the defeats she has now sustained. In Germany the earlier assurance of victory has been transformed into the cold comfort of Hitler's denial that he will ever capitulate.

Practically the question how soon the progressive Allied achievement will lead to the final triumph resolves itself into the question of Germany's power to continue the struggle indefinitely. Without Germany's support Italy would collapse overnight. Less directly the fate of Japan also depends on the German resistance. In what degree will the German people and the German army continue to stand behind Hitler and the Nazi system when world mastery and unlimited loot are seen to be beyond their reach? Will they face the unshaken prospect of total ruin and unlimited disaster? We do not know. Britain, Greece and Yugoslavia, to name only these, have stood undismayed by adversity. Their cause called forth their moral strength.

Will the Germans derive more strength from reflections on unsuccessful brigandage? Upon an answer to this question the duration of war will, I believe, depend.

Dullest Capital in the World

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DAKAR is the capital of French West Africa whose 15 million people are governed from it.

And it is probably the dullest capital in the world. Its dullness is the product of its climate. Constant dull skies and steamy enervating heat sap the strength of those who have to live there and are almost unbearably depressing even to the casual visitor. But because of its position on the edge of Africa, where it bulges out towards Brazil, France spent millions of pounds on its development as port and on measures to defend it against invasion. In peacetime 7,000 ships went in and out of its harbour every year. It was a coaling and oil fuelling station and a naval base.

It was long suspected that Axis submarines operating against our convoys in the South Atlantic used it as base or at least were supplied by ships using it.

Dakar first leapt into war news two years ago when General De Gaulle made his abortive move to occupy it with a Free French force. He abandoned the attempt when the garrison resisted.

The Governor-General of French West Africa, M. Pierre Boisson, seemed a willing tool of Vichy in its anti-Allied policy in Africa.

He threw himself eagerly into the task of strengthening the defences of the capital and the colony and in stamping out any open De Gaullist sympathies.

But he, just as persistently, opposed all German designs to send military missions to Dakar and he stubbornly resisted suggestions that German troops should be sent to help in the protection of the colony. Nevertheless, the Germans sent plenty of agents there and they were all busy preparing for Axis plans of the future. Those plans have been thwarted now.—*The Daily Express.*

Egypt's Role in the War

Great Help Given to Allies

[*By* Dr. HASSAN NASHAAT PASHA, Egyptian Ambassador to Britain, in an interview to the *Manchester Daily Despatch.*]

A question that may be asked at this important turning point in the war is what part Egypt has played in the North African campaign and what help Egypt has given to the Allies. Better put the same question as from the beginning of the war up till now.

The first and most important help that Egypt rendered her Allies was a welcome home to all forces. Fighting forces were not only sure of security in their rear but were also sure that the whole nation—Government and people—were ready to help at any critical moment. When, in July, General Auchinleck had to retreat and Rommel's guns could very distinctly be heard in Alexandria and localities nearby, the true spirit of the Egyptian nation became apparent—confidence, calmness and faith in her Allies.

Attacking forces in any battlefield rely on the co-operation of the great number of people operating behind the lines. Defences of all strategical points in the country, such as bridges, railways, ports and stores, were undertaken by the Egyptian army. The anti-aircraft defences of Egypt were all manned by Egyptian soldiers. Many thousands of Egyptian workmen of all kinds were engaged by the Allies in works necessary for the campaign.

Priority on roads and railways was given to the forces and materials concerned with war. The railways had a very difficult task. Deprived of renewal of materials generally imported, they had to do their best to satisfy both ordinary and military traffic. The help of the railways was vital to the Allies, and to give you a small example of their tremendous effort, I shall quote from the *Railway Gazette* of November 6, 1942, which stated that in spite of a shortage of locomotives and rolling-stock, they could by careful control satisfy all military needs.

Everything that the country possessed or produced was placed at the disposal of Egypt's Allies, and help has even been sent to neighbouring countries under the control of the Allies.

If Egypt did not declare war, this step was taken after consultation with her British ally, and for many complicated reasons. But, generally speaking, the help that Egypt would have rendered had she declared war in the circumstances would not have been greater than the help she has actually been giving.

I think I can say that Egypt, with the Suez Canal running through her land, and with the goodwill and alliance of the British people, will be a large factor in the maintenance of the Mediterranean as a free waterway to all countries of the world.

IS THAT AN ARMY BIRD?

MEMBERS of the public finding or capturing a pigeon that is in difficulties are requested by the military authorities to examine the bird in order to ascertain whether it is a part of India's Fighting Services.

Military birds carry a metal identification ring on one leg, stamped with various particulars. For instance, the ring on an Army pigeon shows first the letters C.M., then the last two numbers of the year the bird was hatched, and a further number (the pigeon's individual serial number).

Whatever the mark, the bird should be taken with the least possible delay, and without interference with any message it may be carrying, to the nearest police station.

It is, of course, possible that the bird may be carrying a message, but not any means of identification. In this case also the bird should be taken to the nearest police station.

Timoshenko's Great Offensive

By MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES GWYNN

TIMOSHENKO'S great counter-offensive in Russia is a masterpiece of timing and well-concealed intentions. If its initial tremendous success can be exploited fully, it will lead to the greatest disaster that the Germans have yet experienced.

It has of course been evident for a long time that Timoshenko's relief armies constituted a potential threat to the Germans at Stalingrad if they could muster sufficient striking power to break through the Axis flank defences. But that was a big " if " and little indication was given that Timoshenko could do more than relieve some of the pressure on the city and throw an increased strain on German communications and resources.

How has Timoshenko been able to acquire a striking power which has enabled him to break-through the elaborate German defences? It seems probable that British and American weapons have been accumulated for this major effort—and German reports admit their appearance. If so, it gives fresh reason to believe that weapons have been forged capable of penetrating the defensive systems on which the Germans have placed great confidence.

Has the Axis over-confidence in the value of defensive methods been the primary cause of their disasters in Egypt and now in Russia? In each case they have thrust their offensive armies into a strategically unsound position and clung dangerously long to the offensive advantages they had gained. The result has been that their defences have broken down.

LOOKING BACK AT RUSSIAN DEFENCE

Looking back, it is more than ever clear how immensely important was the successful Russian defence at Voronezh. If the Germans had been able to push eastwards towards the Volga cutting the railways leading from Central Russia to the south and prolonging the defensive flank of their great southern offensive, the isolation of the lower Volga and Caucasus would have been completed.

Without those railways, Timoshenko's relief armies could never have been assembled in a threatening position. The probable course of action of the German force, now in such a dangerous predicament, is a subject of much speculation. It is argued that it might still retreat before the Russian pincers close, despite the fact that both railways forming its main lines of communication have been cut. No doubt the mobile element of the army might get away by road in somewhat the same manner as Rommel saved a part of his force at El-Alamein. The retreat would, however, entail vast sacrifices of material and probably much of the less mobile personnel.

As in the case of Rommel, it is probable that the greater part of the supply depots of the army has been formed in the forward areas between the Don and the Volga in the neighbourhood of railheads. In that case, it is almost certain that a large army, dependent on mechanized transport, would in a long retreat run short of supplies, especially petrol. The intermediate depots would suffice only to meet the needs of a comparatively small force.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RUSSIAN CAVALRY

Weather conditions at this season would militate against mechanized movement and Russian cavalry might have many opportunities for exploiting traditional harassing tactics. I find it difficult to believe that the Germans will retreat except as a desperate measure to save a part of their army. It seems more probable that if they cannot counter-attack to recover the use of railways they will attempt to follow the Staraya Russa precedent and establish a hedgehog position dependent on supplies accumulated in the forward areas supplemented by air transport; in this way they may hope that a rescue army, forward from reserves and withdrawals from the Caucasus front, will eventually re-open communications.

But the delivery of Timoshenko's stroke at a time when some German reserves may be on the move to other theatres might make the formation of a rescue force difficult. Incidentally, it may be noted that the stroke was also timed to bring the maximum assistance to Stalingrad at a critical period when ice movements on the Volga made supply and reinforcements particularly difficult and when frozen ground favoured a renewal of German attacks.

INDIAN TANKMEN CHANGE HATS

In order to bring them more closely into line with the men of the Royal Armoured Corps, personnel of the Indian Armoured Corps are changing their head-dress.

First step has been taken in Iraq and Iran, where every officer and man of an Indian Cavalry Regiment has been issued with a black beret.

Sikh personnel are, of course, excepted. They retain their familiar turbans.

The boys like their new berets, and find them both comfortable and convenient. They say that the similarity of head-dress gives them a greater feeling of comradeship with the British.

Japanese Aims Foiled

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"WHAT were Japan's aims in starting the war when she did?" asks the *Sunday Times.* Answering its own question, it says:

Because of the enormous potential strength of America, it was timed to be coincidental with and dependent on German victory in Europe. Therefore, it was planned in the autumn of 1941 when Germany looked like beating Russia.

with aircraft-carriers against Japanese bases with land-based planes and the result might have been crippling to the American navy. The scheme fell through.

Firstly, Germany did not beat Russia; secondly, the Allies in the Pacific from the battle of the Macassar Straits onwards inflicted heavy losses.

After a very shaky start from December to the end of March, the handling of the American fleet and the deeds of the Fleet Air Arm shine as one of the brightest stars among all the Allied victories. The steady toll taken also played an important part and there has been a slow but quite perceptible decrease in the efficiency of the Japanese air force all

The work of the Maintenance Command of the British Royal Air Force, of which little is heard, is of vital importance in the struggle against Germany as it supplies all service requirements, from a split pin to a complete aircraft. Huge reserves of bombs are also stored in long tunnels bored out of the solid rock. Here are rows of large American-made bombs being stacked by a British Air Sergeant with the aid of a crane.

Had Japan been ready with enough first-class modern planes, it might have been started one or two years earlier when things looked black for Great Britain. No doubt, Japan imagined that in the far distant future, America might be crushed completely between the Japanese and the German millstones; but, it seems, her immediate object was quite practicable.

One, it was to occupy quickly the whole of the Indonesian and Australasian territories which might serve as base for America to attack Japan when her strength was awakened. If she could do that, she would force America to attack Japan over along ocean distances

through the year while that of the Allies has been increasing with better planes and more experience.

The conclusion is then that if after the cleaning-up of the Solomons and New Guinea, the Allies are strong enough to attack Rabaul which will be within the range of quite a number of Allied air bases, the Japanese will simply be forced to send everything they have to this furthest extremity and the key point of their advance or else give up all hope of achieving that great oceanic, strategical position which alone could give them even the faintest hope of withstanding the rising tide of American power.

The Strategy of Initiative

By LORD STRABOLGI

THE immediate reaction of the German High Command to the new strategical situation in the Mediterranean was the occupation of the remainder of France and the despatch of all immediately available aircraft and seaborne troops to Tunisia.

These were defensive measures and the movement to Tunis can probably only have a delaying effect.

Unless the Axis powers are prepared to resign themselves to the loss of initiative and all that it means, new offensive campaigns must be embarked upon with little delay. Ever since the outbreak of the present world war, Germany has enjoyed initiative in every direction and has been able to throw her opponents on the defensive for three years in all the main theatres of war. Even the entry of the United States of America as an active combatant did not affect this situation for the United States was thrown on the defensive by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and the serious blows struck there and elsewhere in the Pacific against American naval power.

The total defeat of the German and Italian armies under Field Marshal Rommel followed by almost simultaneous landings of large British and American expeditionary forces in Algeria and Morocco has obviously been a surprise to the Axis High Command and the initiative now passes to their opponents.

To appreciate how serious is the general situation for the Axis High Command, it must be remembered that it has lost initiative or is rapidly losing it on the eastern front also. The coming of winter has found the Axis armies in Russia held up on the Volga and in the Caucasus, witnessing preparations for counter-attack by numerous Russian armies standing along the central and northern sectors of the immense front. Some counter-stroke must be embarked upon and it must be on a large scale. Merely to pour further reinforcements into Tunisia would not meet the situation especially as the local population and garrisons are aiding the opponents of the Axis.

THREE AXIS DIRECTIONS

There are three other directions in which an attempt could be made to regain initiative. First, and by far the most effective, would be a successful invasion of the British Isles across the English Channel and the North Sea. This can be ruled out, partly because the weather is too uncertain for the next three months for such an immense undertaking and partly because the vast preparations necessary would take too long. In any case, the lack of sufficient naval and air strength at the disposal of the Axis removes such an invasion beyond the bounds of military practicability.

Two, other offensives which could be embarked upon would be a thrust through Turkey or an attempted occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. Either of these strategical moves would, if successful, restore the initiative to the Aixs but both would create very great difficulties and obstacles.

It would be an obvious policy of the German High Command to try to induce the Turkish Government to open the Dardanelles and permit the use of Turkish roads, railways and aerodromes for the passage of the Axis forces, but it would appear to be highly improbable from all the evidence available that the Turkish Government would follow the example of the Bulgarian Government when the Axis were attacking Greece. If Turks fought, a new army of a million men with a good military tradition would have to be overcome. The Axis powers and their minor allies have large concentrations of troops, materials and aircraft in the regions affected and could advance in force through Roumania and Bulgaria to the shores of the Bosporus. The United Nations could send reinforcements to Turkey by way of Syria and Persia.

VALUE OF SPANISH PORTS

If the Iberian Peninsula could be brought under Axis control, fine Spanish and Portguese harbours on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean coasts would be of great strategical value and Gibraltar would be invested. The capture of Gibraltar by assault would be a desperate undertaking, for it is common knowledge that its fortifications have been immensely strengthened in the last three years. But the harbour and the roadstead of Gibraltar could be made useless, for its present valuable purpose for the assembly of convoys, by the heavy guns mounted on the Spanish mainland. The very passage of the straits of Gibraltar could be rendered hazardous to the shipping of the United Nations by long-range artillery and aircraft based on Spanish aerodromes and by submarines operating from Spanish harbours. If the island of Minorca could be brought under Axis control, it would also have great value in the forthcoming Mediterranean operations.

So much for theory. In practice, the rape of Spain and Portugal by German forces would have serious political repercussions particularly in South America, where Axis powers still hope to retain certain friendships and connections.

London in Wartime

By DALE COLLINS, the well-known short-story writer.

AN awful lot of praise is handed out to wives and mothers in wartime; during these three years in Britain they have certainly earned it. In fact, I have joined in the chorus myself on occasion, but what about the poor old husbands?

Speaking as one myself, I think we deserve a pat on the back.

Here's a snapshot that surprises me. In it I find myself. Under one arm I have a huge bundle of washing, done up in a sheet: a month's cargo of the stuff that simply can't be done at home. Two large empty shopping bags are in my left hand. That's very odd, surely. Only for the fact that the camera does not lie, I would not believe it.

THE NATIONAL LOAF

The laundry deposited, I go on my way and run into Edward Rigby, the film actor, who has just made a big hit in "Salute John Citizen" after doing much fine work in British pictures for many years. In other days we might have met in a golf club and talked about stymies and drives of amazing length. Now we stand together in the queue at the baker's and talk about the national loaf, which, we agree, is darned good eating.

This reminds Rigby that he played Friend in the Australian production of Maeterlinck's "Bluebird" before the last war. And that reminds me that as a small boy in the front row of the gallery at the Theatre Royal, I fell madly in love with the child who played Tyltyl. We wonder what has happened to her. Then, tucking the bread into our bags, we part.

"I'm off to the grocer's", says Gossip Rigby. Gossip Collins replies: "I'm going to the butcher's for our weekly two bob and four penn'orth. The wife chose it, beef, this week."

And Gossip Rigby says: "We got a nice little of mutton."

AT THE BUTCHER'S

At the butcher's I run into Fennymore, the Secretary of the Institute of Art and Design at the National Gallery. He's pally to every artist in England from John and Epstein down, but he has a shopping bag too, and Gossip Collins and Gossip Fennymore compare their pieces of beef, each a little afraid that the other may have the better bargain.

There was a time when the only places Taffy or I would have met were the Savage or Arts Clubs, or the Cafe Royal. Imagine our faces then if we had been told to go to the butcher's and pick up the joint. We take a glass of stout together, as two busy house-husbands are entitled to in the middle of Saturday's shopping.

SO IT GOES

At the greengrocer's I find a Paymaster Commander. He is shrewdly weighing the merits of two cauliflowers. He prides himself on his shopping prowess and whispers to me: "They've fine lobsters on at Smith's."

"Have they, b'jove," say I, "thanks a lot for the tip."

And so it goes. And the wives, they have a million things to do. Believe me, a man would have to be stony-hearted and selfish not to lend a hand.—*A recent B.B.C. talk.*

1917 and 1942

By WICKHAM STEED

IS there any likeness between this year 1942 and 1917? History never repeats itself, say "scientific" historians; and philosophical controversy is full of warnings against arguments from analogy. Yet I sometimes wonder whether future historians will not find a striking likeness between 1917 and 1942.

Then, especially toward the close of 1917, Germany appeared to be on the top of the wave. Its crest seemed to be sweeping her irresistibly onward to total victory.

But by November 1918 Germany had fallen into the trough of the wave and was engulfed. Are the United Nations entitled to see in this precedent an omen?

OUTLOOK TO-DAY

To-day the Allies are stronger, not weaker, than they were in 1918. Soviet Russia, united as Tsarist Russia was never united, is strong and indomitable; though her armies, like those of France up to June 1917, have been bearing the brunt of the struggle on land.

On sea, the silent pressure of the British and—since December 1941—of the American blockade is helping to strangle the German beast. Under the hail of British bombs, soon to be increased by more American bombs, the Rhineland and Western Germany are devastated regions. Great British, Canadian and American armies, supported by air forces stronger than those of Germany, await impatiently the hour to strike the final blow.

That hour will come. This war against the German-Fascist beast is one war, indivisible, as victory and the peace must be.

Yet I see to-day a difference between 1917 and 1942. It is that the outlook twenty-five years ago was far blacker than the outlook now is. In other respects I think the analogy between 1917 and 1942 close enough to warrant belief that 1943 will make the Germans look back on 1918 as a comparatively happy year.

Axis too Late to Avert Biggest Blow

By H. C. FERRABY

IT is now clear for everyone to see that the German Supreme Command failed to make preparations in time for the interception of the great expedition that the United Nations sent by sea to North Africa.

The plain fact appears to be that no great concentration of U-boats was available for attack on the expedition at the start of the operations. Even more surprising was the inactivity of the Italian battle squadron. Italian naval bases are within easy striking distance of the Algerian coast.

It was evident from the outset that the naval strength of the United Nations had been perforce divided into separate forces, a tactical situation in which no Admiral likes to find himself.

The Italians had available as far as is known at least four modern 35,000-ton battleships—the new *Impero* and *Roma* with the *Littorio* and *Vittoria Veneto*—and two, possibly three of the older battleships of the *Cavour* class. No public reference has been made to any movement by this powerful battle squadron.

Taken all round, the Axis reaction at sea to this big offensive by their antagonists was deplorably weak. Freedom of the sea was conceded without struggle in the crucial 48 hours of the opening of the campaign.

FORCED TO DANGEROUS TACTICS

Some effort to restore the position was bound to be made subsequently. Almost certainly a rapid assembly of U-boats into the Straits of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean must have commenced.

Obviously they had to set about making an attempt to interfere with the free use of the new sally ports now taken over by the United Nations. Two consequences must follow: a lessening of the pressure on more distant convoy routes such as that round the Cape of Good Hope and the exposure of U-boats to a concentrated attack of hostile patrols confined to the waters.

It will have been noticed that throughout this war German submarines have avoided narrow seas such as the English Channel and the Irish Sea and the approaches to the south of Ireland. Modern anti-submarine devices are particularly deadly in such an area.

Now because they were "too late" in the first week of November the U-boats will have to give battle under conditions that are unfavourable to them from the start. The change that has come over the general picture of the battle of trade-routes by the successful move into the Mediterranean is startling. It is perhaps more important in its effect on the naval campaign than it is on the future of the land campaign. Success at sea is and must remain the key to the ultimate success of the whole war and the Nazis were "too late" to avert the biggest blow to their sea campaign that has yet been struck.

Position in the Pacific

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THE position in the Pacific in December 1942 wears a very different aspect for the Japanese than did that which arose immediately after Pearl Harbour. They have gained vast territory as they planned but they have had their naval strength reduced by half.

The American navy has recovered from its fractured limb and moves again in full strength whereas the Japanese resources are not great enough to replace all the lost aircraft-carriers, cruisers and destroyers that have been expended during the year on glittering adventures. And the harbours of Singapore, Sourabaya and Manila are static. They can play no part in a sea struggle round the Solomons.

The Japanese grasped the shadow of land conquest and find themselves threatened with the loss of that sea control which is the sole defence of an island power.

The year's naval operations in the Pacific began with a spectacular success for the air weapon. Pearl Harbour was soon followed by the destruction of two of Britain's capital ships off Malaya. As the American fleet recovered its balance, the two remarkable battles of the Coral Sea and Midway added to the historic achievements of the air weapon though success then went to the other side.

But recent weeks have shown that surface ships are still the ultimate arbiter in a dispute for sea passage. The three battles of the Solomons since the middle of October have been naval fights in which the air weapon played a part not more important than that of the gun or the torpedo.

The story of those engagements must give pause to any who are asked to believe that air power and not sea power is the decisive element in an oceanic war.—The *Manchester Guardian.*

Diary of the War

ENGLAND AND GERMANY

11th Dec.—It was revealed that Hitler had begun widespread preparations to defend the west-coast of Europe against a possible invasion.

12th Dec.—The Royal Air Force attacked enemy shipping off the Belgian coast.

All prisoners of war who had been shackled in Britain and Canada were freed from the shackles.

Long-range guns on both sides of the Channel were engaged in a duel. British guns opened first.

13th Dec.—There was a little enemy activity over the coastal areas of north-east England.

Two enemy ships were sunk in the Channel.

14th Dec.—United States aircraft raided Rouen.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE ATLANTIC

11th Dec.—Mrs. Roosevelt suggested in a broadcast the creation of a volunteer women's land army to augment America's agricultural man-power.

13th Dec.—The United States Navy took over the Elk Hills oilfields in California.

14th Dec.—It was announced that the first wooden military transport plane was rapidly nearing completion.

INDIA, BURMA AND CEYLON

11th Dec.—Speaking at a public meeting at Cuddalore, South Arcot, His Excellency Sir Arthur Hope uttered a warning that an attack may be made on India and that a few Japanese may come by air.

12th Dec.—Japanese aircraft raided Chittagong. Slight damage was caused. The Royal Air Force destroyed three of the raiders.

13th Dec.—United States planes raided Rangoon. A direct hit was scored on the dock.

Mr. William Phillips was appointed American Ambassador to India.

The Royal Air Force raided Mandalay and Naba, north of Mandalay.

A 8,000-ton German freighter carrying valuable cargo, scuttled herself in the Indian Ocean when intercepted by Allied naval forces.

15th Dec.—The Royal Air Force attacked the Japanese aerodrome at Magwe.

16th Dec.—The Royal Air Force bombed the Japanese occupied villages in the Kaladan and Mayu river in Burma.

A rousing reception was accorded to General Wavell in Colombo.

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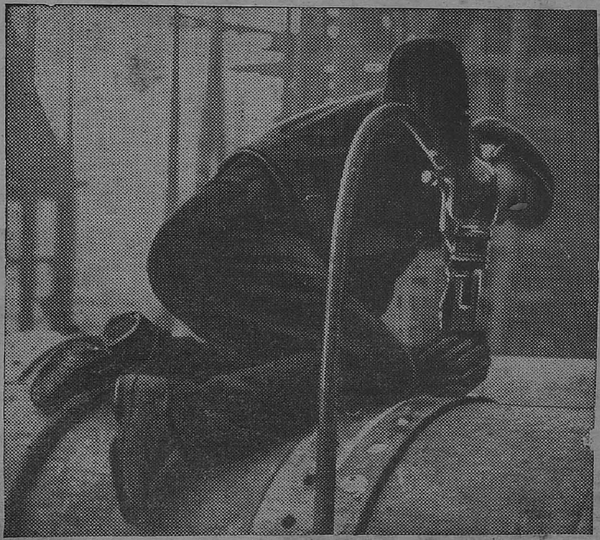
ITALY, AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

11th Dec.—Turin was again bombed. Many buildings were hit.

Both sides in Tunisia speeded up preparations for new large-scale operations.

There was intense air activity over the El Agheila front.



British shipyards, launching merchant vessels with all possible speed, are now producing more than twice as many ships in three months as in the last quarter before the war. Widespread use of prefabrication has helped this speed-up, and welding instead of riveting is saving time and steel. A 10,000 tonner now gets its last coat of paint only 5½ months after the keel laying. Picture shows: A worker "getting down to it" with a pneumatic riveter.

It was reported that representatives of industrial concerns led by Senator Pirelli and Count Volpi were attempting with the help of the King of Italy to win over the army.

12th Dec.—Axis forces launched an attack in the direction of Medjez El Bah. A number of enemy tanks were destroyed.

13th Dec.—The Royal Air Force attacked Naples and Turin. French forces occupied Bir Hakeim. Mr. Stimson, Secretary for War, U.S., revealed that Allied operations in that Allied operations in Tunisia were successfully proceeding "about a month ahead of schedule."

An Axis freighter was sunk by the Greek submarine *Papanicolis*.

14th Dec.—An Axis convoy was attacked in the Mediterranean and an armed merchant cruiser was sunk.

According to the German News Agency, "the attack of the British Eighth Army against Rommel's forces began" in El Agheila area.

As the result of Royal Air Force raids, it was disclosed that 5,772 houses were destroyed in Genoa and 161 were destroyed and 3,200 damaged in Turin.

Enemy efforts to infiltrate in the neighbourhood of Medjez were stopped.

15th Dec.—In the battle of El Agheila, Rommel was thrown out and he retreated. Allied aircraft pounded the enemy troops.

The French troops captured an important position west of Sidi Bousid in Central Tunisia.

The administration of Madagascar was handed over to General de Gaulle.

16th Dec.—German troops retreated 40 to 90 miles west of El Agheila. British army moved into El Brega.

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RUSSIA AND FINLAND

11th Dec.—The Germans brought in reinforcements to the Central Front. German counter-attacks were beaten off in Stalingrad.

12th Dec.—Russian army broke through the enemy lines near Lake Ilmen.

13th Dec.—An important German base was captured on the left bank of the Don, north-west of Stalingrad.

14th Dec.—The Nazis launched strong counter-attacks in south-west of Stalingrad and east of Velikie Luki.

15th Dec.—There was severe fighting in Kotelnikovo area. The Germans were on the defensive in the Central Front.

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NEUTRAL COUNTRIES

12th Dec.—Rioting broke out in the streets of Teheran. Troops fired on the demonstrators.

SHIPPING

13th Dec.—The United States' former liner *President Coolidge* was sunk recently in the South Pacific.

The British mine sweeper *Cromer* was lost.

15th Dec.—The British destroyer *Penylan* was lost.

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VICHY AND OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

11th Dec.—Forty-nine tons of gold were taken away by the Germans from the vaults of the Bank of France.

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THE FAR EAST

11th Dec.—Gona was completely cleared of Japanese forces.

12th Dec.—A Japanese counter-attack collapsed under Allied fire in Buna.

Severe fighting was in progress in Western Yunnan on Chinese-Burmese border.

Admiral Lutzow, official spokesman of the German navy, broadcasting from Berlin, claimed that Japan was "satisfied" with her Pacific conquests and contemplated no further conquests.

13th Dec.—South of Somada, repeated Japanese counter-attacks were repulsed. Six enemy aircraft were shot down over northern Solomons.

14th Dec.—A Japanese destroyer was sunk and seven others were damaged off the Solomon islands. Japanese bases at Lae and Salamana were raided by Allied aircraft.

15th Dec.—Japanese positions in Buna were shelled.

16th Dec.—Allied troops captured Buna in New Guinea. The Japanese landed troops north of Gona.

"KING'S FAIRY AIR FORCE."

The Times of India Press, Bombay, have published a book entitled "King's Fairy Air Force" by Mrs. Dart, an exhibitor of the Royal Academy, with a foreword by Her Excellency the Marchioness of Linlithgow. The proceeds of sales of the book go to Her Excellency's Silver Trinket Fund and the first edition has been produced free of charge by the publishers. The pictures in themselves are, in Her Excellency's words, "a delight and the fact that every copy sold goes to provide comforts for our troops, Indian and British, as well as ambulances for the sick and wounded should make a special appeal to us all, men and women." The book is priced Rs. 5 and is available with all booksellers.

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